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Horticultural industry veteran heads State Noxious Weed Control Board

OLYMPIA – A veteran from the horticultural industry in the western United States has become the new administrator of the top weed control agency in Washington state. Steve McGonigal became the executive director of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board this past fall. Based in Olympia, he'll work throughout the state.

The Noxious Weed Control Board is an advisory board to the state Department of Agriculture with a mission to "... serve as responsible stewards of Washington by protecting and preserving the land and resources from the degrading impact of noxious weeds." The board coordinates and supports the activities of 48 county weed control boards and weed districts in the state, among numerous other activities.

Previously, McGonigal had performed government relations duties for one of the state's horticultural trade groups. Before that he was associate publisher and editor of *Western Landscaping News,* a journal serving plant industry professionals in the western 13 states. McGonigal studied forestry and natural resources at Humboldt State University.

"Weed problems threaten a whole host of resource-based industries and recreational areas," McGonigal said. "The brightest future for the plant and seed industries includes demonstrating to our state's citizens that the industries are made up of responsible people who avoid the unnecessary distribution of noxious weeds."

There are 114 plants included on the 2002 noxious weed list approved by the board in November.

McGonigal can be contacted at the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560; (360) 902-2053; SmcGonigal@agr.wa.gov. The board's Web site is at www.wa.gov/agr/weedboard.

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